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# Ex-C.I.A. Aide Cites Westmoreland's Help on Troop Figures

By M. A. FARBER

The former chief of Vietnamese affairs for the Central Intelligence Agency testified yesterday that he believed for a few days in 1967 that Gen. William C. Westmoreland had imposed a ceiling of 300,000 on reports of the size of enemy forces in South Vietnam, perhaps to avoid criticism by the press.

But the witness, George A. Carver Jr., said in Federal Court in Manhattan that when he confronted General Westmoreland with his concern at a private meeting in Saigon on Sept. 13, 1967, the general "immediately, firmly and emphatically denied that he had given any such order."

Moreover, Mr. Carver told the jury in General Westmoreland's \$120 million libel suit against CBS, the general was instrumental in helping to quickly arrange an accord on enemy strength figures between his own intelligence officers and the C.I.A. after months of dispute in which the C.I.A. had favored reporting higher troop figures than General Westmoreland's command.

The 1982 CBS Reports documentary that prompted the suit — "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception" — said that officers at "the highest levels" of military intelligence had conspired to minimize enemy strength by setting an "arbitrary ceiling" of 300,000 for Communist forces.

To achieve that end, the broadcast said, General Westmoreland adopted the "tactic" of deleting the Vietcong's self-defense units from the official listing of enemy strength known as the order of battle.

Mr. Carver's purpose in visiting Saigon in September 1967 was to reach an agreement on new order of battle figures, which would be incorporated in a special estimate of enemy strength for President Johnson. In a cablegram to C.I.A. officials on Aug. 30, 1967, Richard Helms, then Director of Central Intelligence, described the issue as "charged with political and public relations overtones."

Yesterday, Mr. Carver cited that cablegram and others that he himself had sent to Mr. Helms from Saigon early in September 1967. Mr. Carver's frustration before he talked to General Westmoreland was captured at the beginning of the first cablegram he addressed to Mr. Helms — on Sept. 10, two days after his arrival in Saigon.

By that time Mr. Carver and aides who had come with him from C.I.A. headquarters in Langley, Va., had met with Maj. Gen. Phillip B. Davidson Jr., General Westmoreland's chief of intelligence, and the general's intelligence analysts. Among Mr. Carver's aides was Samuel A. Adams, who, 14 years later, would become a consultant for CBS on its Vietnam documentary.

But General Westmoreland, on Sept. 10, 1967, was on leave in Manila.

## Frustration Is Noted

"So far, our mission frustratingly unproductive since MACV stonewalling, obviously under orders," Mr. Carver wrote Mr. Helms, using the initials for General Westmoreland's command. "Unless or until I can persuade Westmoreland to amend those orders, serious discussion of evidence or substantive issues will be impossible."

Mr. Carver said the "root problems, as we all recognize, lie more in political public relations realm than in substantive difference" and added that the discussions "all point to the inescapable conclusion that General Westmoreland (with Komer's encouragement) has given instruction tantamount to direct order that VC strength total will not exceed 300,000 ceiling."

The parenthetical reference was to Robert W. Komer, General Westmoreland's chief civilian deputy, who was away at that time in Bangkok.

Mr. Carver told Mr. Helms that General Westmoreland's "rationale seems to be that any higher figure would not

be sufficiently optimistic and would generate unacceptable level of criticism from the press."

Yesterday, Mr. Carver said that in his "distress" he had used "purple prose" in the cablegram. "The MACV people were so obtuse and difficult," he said, "that I made the inference they were under orders."

## Estimates of Strength Differ

When Mr. Carver arrived in Saigon, C.I.A. officials leaned to a total enemy strength figure ranging from 311,000 to 371,000, excluding an estimated 120,000 part-time forces in the self-defense units. The order of battle total at the time was 298,000. General Westmoreland's command proposed a total figure of 213,000 — excluding a newly estimated figure of 85,000 for political cadre that was counted in the C.I.A. total and that had been carried in the existing order of battle at a figure of 40,000.

Military intelligence officials also differed with the C.I.A. over the self-defense forces, which were listed in the existing order of battle at about 70,000. Senior C.I.A. officials said they agreed with General Westmoreland's command that the self-defense forces had little offensive military ability. But the C.I.A. wanted these units counted — if

only in a "nonmilitary" appendix to the order of battle — and General Westmoreland's officers insisted they not be counted in the future.

General Davidson, Mr. Carver said yesterday, took a "take it or leave it" approach to the dispute. And, on Sept. 12, he and Mr. Adams and other C.I.A. representatives in Saigon, he said, took another look at the C.I.A. figures. They now arrived at a total enemy strength of 229,000 to 259,000, with a separate listing of 80,000 to 90,000 for political cadre and no formal counting of the self-defense forces.

Within hours of his meeting with General Westmoreland the next morning, Mr. Carver testified, an agreement was reached on an enemy strength range of 224,000 to 249,000, plus a separate listing of 75,000 to 85,000 for political cadre. The self-defense forces would not be counted in the order of battle but they "would be described verbally" and, in the estimate for President Johnson, note would be taken they they had once been as high as 150,000.

"Circle now squared," Mr. Carver cabled Mr. Helms, "chiefly as a result of Westmoreland session."

Mr. Carver's testimony will continue on Tuesday.